

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of managing data, the method comprising:  
displaying a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data  
cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data  
set;  
automatically inserting predefined filter criteria in filter cells in response  
to a selection of a user;  
identifying which of the data cells satisfy the filter criteria that is  
associated with the respective data cells;  
sorting the data sets of the identified data cells; and  
displaying the sorted data sets of data cells, wherein the identified cells  
are displayed contiguously and interposed between non-identified data cells,  
wherein the data cells are identified, sorted, and displayed in response to the  
selection of the predefined filter criteria, and wherein the data sets associated  
with the identified data cells are graphically displayed to a user via highlight,  
color or other image marking that is different from the highlight, color, or image  
marking that is used for the non-identified data cells.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the predefined filter criteria is stored in  
a computer memory.
3. The method of Claim 1, additionally comprising determining whether the  
selection of the predetermined filter criteria triggers the automatic selection of filter  
criteria in the filter cells and wherein the automatic insertion is performed if the  
selection of the predetermined filter criteria triggers the automatic selection.
4. A method of managing data, the method comprising:  
displaying in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a  
plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the  
data cells belongs to at least one data set, and wherein each of the data cells is  
associated with at least one of the filter cells;  
automatically inserting predefined filter criteria in filter cells in response  
to a selection of a user;

identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells; and

sorting the data sets of the identified data cells.

5           5.       The method of Claim 4, wherein the predefined filter criteria is stored in a computer memory.

6.       A method of managing data, the method comprising:

10           displaying in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, wherein each of the columns or rows has an associated sort procedure, and wherein each of the data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;

receiving filter criteria via one or more of the filter cells;

15           identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells;

sorting the data sets of the identified data cells, wherein the sorting is based at least in part upon one of the sort procedures; and

displaying the sorted data sets contiguously and interposed between non-identified data sets.

20           7.       The method of Claim 6, additionally comprising:

receiving predefined filter criteria in a selected cell via one or more of the filter cells; and

automatically inserting the predefined filter criteria in filter cells in response to a selection of a user.

25           8.       The method of Claim 7, wherein the predefined filter criteria is stored in a computer memory.

9.       The method of Claim 6, wherein dependent on user settings, the non-identified data sets are not displayed.

30           10.      The method of Claim 6, wherein the display of the non-identified data sets may be disabled by the user.

11. The method of Claim 6, wherein the first of the identified data sets is displayed about one third from the top of the table.

12. A method of managing data, the method comprising:

5 displaying in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, wherein each of the columns or rows has an associated sort procedure, and wherein each of the data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;

receiving filter criteria via one or more of the filter cells;

10 identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells;

sorting the data sets of the identified data cells, wherein the sorting is based at least in part upon one of the sort procedures; and

15 displaying at least the sorted data sets, wherein the sorted data sets are graphically displayed via highlight, color or other image marking that is different from the highlight, color, or image marking that is used to display the non-identified data sets, and wherein the highlight, color, or image marking is automatically applied to the sorted data sets.

13. The method of Claim 12, additionally comprising:

20 receiving predefined filter criteria in a selected cell via one or more of the filter cells; and

automatically inserting the predefined filter criteria in filter cells in response to a selection of a user.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the predefined filter criteria is stored  
25 in a computer memory.

15. A method of managing data, the method comprising:

30 displaying in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, wherein each of the columns or rows has an associated sort procedure, and wherein each of the data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;

receiving filter criteria via one or more of the filter cells;  
identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells;  
sorting the data sets of the identified data cells, wherein the sorting is  
5 based at least in part upon one of the sort procedures; and  
displaying the sorted data sets in response to character-by-character input or upon the lapse of a preset pause period during which no input character is received.

16. The method of Claim 15, additionally comprising:  
10 receiving predefined filter criteria in a selected cell via one or more of the filter cells; and  
automatically inserting the predefined filter criteria in filter cells in response to a selection of a user.

17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the predefined filter criteria is stored  
15 in a computer memory.

18. A method of managing data, the method comprising:  
displaying in a single window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, wherein each of the  
20 columns or rows has an associated sort procedure, and wherein each of the data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;  
receiving filter criteria via one or more of the filter cells, wherein the receiving is done within the window, and wherein the filter cells permit input of user-defined criteria;  
25 identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells;  
and  
sorting the data sets of the identified data cells, wherein the sorting is based at least in part upon one of the sort procedures.

19. The method of Claim 18, additionally comprising:  
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receiving predefined filter criteria in a selected cell via one or more of the filter cells; and

automatically inserting the predefined filter criteria in filter cells in response to a selection of a user.

5           20.     The method of Claim 19, wherein the predefined filter criteria is stored in a computer memory.

21.     A method of managing data, the method comprising:

10           displaying in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, wherein each of the columns or rows has an associated sort procedure, and wherein each of the data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;

receiving filter criteria via one or more of the filter cells;

15           identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells;

computing a sorting priority list, wherein the sorting priority list is based at least in part upon the entry of filter criteria into the filter cells; and

sorting the data sets of the identified data cells, wherein the sorting is based at least in part upon the sorting priority list.

20           22.     The method of Claim 21, additionally comprising:

receiving predefined filter criteria in a selected cell via one or more of the filter cells; and

automatically inserting the predefined filter criteria in filter cells in response to a selection of a user.

25           23.     The method of Claim 22, wherein the predefined filter criteria is stored in a computer memory.

24.     A method of managing data, the method comprising:

30           displaying in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, wherein each of the columns or rows

has an associated sort procedure, and wherein each of the data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;

receiving filter criteria via one or more of the filter cells;

5 identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells;

providing a sorting priority list that defines a sorting order for the sort procedures, wherein the sorting priority list is based at least in part upon the number of characters that are input into the filter cells; and

10 sorting the data sets of the identified data cells in the order of the sort procedures in the sorting priority list.

25. The method of Claim 24, additionally comprising:

receiving predefined filter criteria in a selected cell via one or more of the filter cells; and

15 automatically inserting the predefined filter criteria in filter cells in response to a selection of a user.

26. The method of Claim 25, wherein the predefined filter criteria is stored in a computer memory.

27. A method of managing data, the method comprising:

20 displaying in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, and wherein each of the data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;

automatically inserting predefined filter criteria, previously defined in a selected cell, in filter cells in response to a selection of a user;

25 identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells; and

sorting the data sets of the identified data cells.

28. The method of Claim 27, wherein the content of each of the data cells is

selectable by a user, and in response to a selection of one of the cells, the content of the selected data cell becomes the filter criteria for the row or column of the selected data cell.

5           29.     The method of Claim 27, additionally comprising determining whether the selection of the predetermined filter criteria triggers the automatic selection of filter criteria in other filter cells and wherein the automatic insertion is performed if the selection of the predetermined filter criteria triggers the automatic selection.

10           30.     The method of Claim 27, wherein the predefined filter criteria is stored in a computer memory.

            31.     A method of managing data, the method comprising:  
                    displaying in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, wherein each of the columns or rows has an associated sort procedure, and wherein each of the data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;

                    receiving filter criteria via one or more of the filter cells;  
                    identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells;  
20             and

                    sorting the data sets of the identified data cells, wherein the sorting is based at least in part upon one of the sort procedures.

            32.     The method of Claim 31, wherein the filter criteria for one of the filter cells is designated by a user via user selection from a list of predetermined values.

            33.     The method of Claim 32, wherein one or more predetermined values are selectable by a user and wherein data cells that satisfy any one of the predetermined values are identified in response to a user selection.

30           34.     The method of Claim 32, wherein in response to user selection of one of the legal values for one of the filter cells, predetermined search criteria are assigned to other of the filter cells.

35. The method of Claim 34, wherein the identifying and sorting acts occur in response to the user selection of one of the legal values.
36. The method of Claim 34, additionally comprising displaying a set of pre-stored filter criteria for filtering two or more of the rows or columns.
- 5 37. The method of Claim 36, wherein the set of pre-stored filter criteria is selectable by a user, and wherein the identifying and sorting acts occur in response to the selection of the set.
38. A system for managing data, the system comprising:
- 10 a first module configured to display in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, and wherein each of the data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;
- 15 a second module configured to automatically insert predefined filter criteria previously defined in a selected cell in filter cells in response to a selection of a user;
- a third module configured to identify which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells; and
- 20 a fourth module configured to sort the data sets of the identified data cells.
39. A system for managing data, the system comprising:
- means for displaying in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, and wherein each of the
- 25 data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;
- means for automatically inserting predefined filter criteria, previously defined in a selected cell, in filter cells in response to a selection of a user;
- means for identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data
- 30 cells; and
- means for sorting the data sets of the identified data cells.



40. A computer readable medium storing a program which performs a method of managing data, the method comprising:

displaying in a window a plurality of filter cells and a table comprising a plurality of rows and columns of data cells, wherein the content of each of the data cells belongs to at least one data set, and wherein each of the data cells is associated with at least one of the filter cells;

automatically inserting predefined filter criteria, previously defined in a selected cell, in filter cells in response to a selection of a user;

identifying which ones of the associated data cells contain data that satisfies the filter criteria of the filter cell that is associated with the data cells; and

sorting the data sets of the identified data cells.